pearls, and also the large scale manufacture of cultured pearls in Japan. It was indeed lucky for Bahrain that oil was found in 1932, or else she would have seen her principal industry slowly decline with nothing with which to replace it. Once the oil industry was established, however, it in its turn served to precipitate the decay of the older industry by providing employment with better conditions and higher pay than were to be found on the pearl banks. The decline had also been unwittingly aided by the reforms of the late Ruler, Shaikh Hamed, who, on becoming Deputy Ruler in 1923, found the working conditions of the industry in a shocking state. The pearl banks were productive and much money was being made but little of it went to the divers, many of whom had involved themselves in a form of financial slavery to the nakhudas. Divers were given advances by the captains before the season, to provide for their families while they were away at sea, and at the end of the season, while the sales of the pearls, were being carried out. The eventual result was that the captains gave advances far in excess of the money due to the divers at the end of the season and to repay these loans the divers were forced to work for the same captain in the following season. But each year the advances were again in excess of the divers' earnings and so they got deeper and deeper into debt to the captains. At the same time the latter were indebted to shore merchants for supplies, for which they were charged high rates of interest, although this was contrary to the Sheria Law. The captains passed this interest on to the divers, who thus paid a minimum of 50% of their original debt each year. Diving debts were bequeathed, sons of divers whose fathers died owing money to captains were forced to work for them, and a diver, if he became too old to work, was only released from diving if he was replaced by his son or some other relation. In addition to this, indebted divers were often made to work on land for their creditors, or were handed over as workers to merchants to whom the nakhuda owed money.

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Shaikh Hamed was determined to abolish all these practices and was supported by some of the more progressive Arabs and the Shiite and Sunni judges, who disapproved of the whole system. Amongst the bitterest opponents of the reforms were the divers themselves who were persuaded by the nakhudas and merchants into believing that they were going to lose by them. The reforms were, however, introduced and resulted in fixed advances, the amounts of which were announced annually by proclamation, the restriction of interest on advances, and all advances in excess of the legal amounts to be unreclaimable in court. The divers were also entitled to seek other work on the condition that they repaid a certain proportion of their diving debt each year. Many thousands of debts were reduced and the special diving court, which had favoured the captains and merchants, was abolished and all diving cases were heard by the ordinary courts. Finally, the debts of a diver died with him and could not be inherited by his heirs. The result of these reforms was that the industry, although reduced in size was put on a much sounder footing and its workers were not forced to dive but did so because they wanted to.

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work harder than in the summer. Between the *Ghaws al Bard* and the great season, or *Ghaws al Kabir,* is the period called *Kanchi-yah,* which lasts about two weeks. Then the fishing season *par excellence,* the great *Khaws al Kabir,* begins at the end of June, after the season of the northwestern wind, and lasts until the middle of October. This period is inaugurated by a proclamation of the Sheik setting the dates of the opening and closing of the season. The two week period of *Raaba* follows and finally, with the coming of cold weather, the *Mujannah,* a period of indefinite length, when fishing is carried on mainly in the shallow coastal waters.

There are two methods commonly used to finance the diving. The best known is for the captain of the boat to borrow money from a merchant on shore in order to advance the men's wages and equip and provision the boat for the season. At the end of the season, after the pearls have been sold, the loan is repaid; the captain takes one-fifth of the profits, and the remainder is divided among the divers and haulers. Since the captain charges interest to the men on the money he has advanced, their pay is quite small and they are constantly in debt.

Another and more efficient system has little by little begun to replace the one just described. The shore merchant, as before, finances the expedition but charges no interest. In return, he has the right to purchase the pearls at 20% below the prevailing market rate and also to collect a share of the profits equal to that of five divers.

Bahrein has long had to compete with the pearl fisheries of Ceylon, but much more serious, at least until the outbreak of World War II, was the invasion of the market by the Japanese growers of cultured pearls. The cultured pearls can be told from "natural" ones only by means of delicate X-ray and specific gravity tests and differ essentially only in the way they are produced. The oysters are grown in beds and irritating objects are inserted in the shells to force the formation of the pearls. The contrast in method is essentially that between agriculture and random hunting for food in the forest.